

a public hearing was scheduled for Thursday, December 2, 2004, at 10 a.m. in the IRS Auditorium, Internal Revenue Service Building, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC. The subject of the public hearing is proposed regulations under section 861 of the Internal Revenue Code. The public comment period for these proposed regulations expired on Tuesday, October 26, 2004. Outlines of oral comments were due on Tuesday, November 12, 2004.

The notice of proposed rulemaking and notice of public hearing, instructed those interested in testifying at the public hearing to submit a request to speak and an outline of the topics to be addressed. As of Wednesday, November 17, 2004, no one has requested to speak. Therefore, the public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, December 2, 2004, is cancelled.

Cynthia E. Grigsby,

Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Legal Processing Division, Associate Chief Counsel, (Procedure and Administration).

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

41 CFR Parts 300-3, 302-2, 302-3, 302-4, 302-5, 302-6, 302-7, 302-9, 302-11, and 302-15

[FTR Case 2003-309]

RIN 3090-AH91

Federal Travel Regulation; Relocation Allowances

AGENCY: Office of Governmentwide Policy, General Services Administration (GSA).

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The General Services Administration (GSA) Office of Governmentwide Policy (OGP) continually reviews and adjusts policies as a part of its ongoing mission to provide policy assistance to the Government agencies subject to the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR). Accordingly, GSA created the Relocation Best Practices Committee (RBPC) to examine Government relocation policy. The RBPC consists of Government as well as private sector relocation experts and produced a complete package of recommendations affecting the statutes and regulations governing relocation. The following proposed FTR changes are the result of recommendations from the RBPC from

benchmarking against private industry, and from GSA, representing Governmentwide policy interests. The proposed changes are intended to keep Government relocation practices in line with current relocation trends and allow for better management of the Government relocation programs and costs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before January 24, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments identified by FTR case 2003-309 by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Agency Web Site: <http://www.gsa.gov/ftr>. Click on the FTR Case number to submit comments.
- E-mail: ftrcase.2003-309@gsa.gov. Include FTR case 2003-309 in the subject line of the message.
- Fax: 202-501-4067.
- Mail: General Services

Administration, Regulatory Secretariat (V), 1800 F Street, NW., Room 4035, ATTN: Laurie Duarte, Washington, DC 20405.

Instructions: Please submit comments only and cite FTR case 2003-309 in all correspondence related to this case. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.gsa.gov/ftr>, including any personal information provided.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Regulatory Secretariat, Room 4035, GS Building, Washington, DC, 20405, (202) 208-7312, for information pertaining to status or publication schedules. For clarification of content, contact Ed Davis, Program Analyst (Team Leader), Office of Governmentwide Policy, Travel Management Policy, at (202) 208-7638. Please cite FTR case 2003-309.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

The General Services Administration (GSA), Office of Governmentwide Policy (OGP), reviews the regulations under its purview to address current Government relocation needs and incorporate private industry policies and best practices, where appropriate. Relocation is an area that continuously changes. Parts of the relocation regulation, such as the storage time and temporary quarters allowance time should not stand alone but be considered in relation to each other. Changes such as these need to be made as part of a new comprehensive relocation regulation.

Much of private industry uses lump sum relocation payments for all relocation expenses except real estate

expenses. Thus, temporary quarters, miscellaneous expenses, and other payments have a small one-time administrative cost and do not need to be reconciled in a post-payment audit. The administrative savings and efficiency improvements of such systems are clear.

Private industry spends less time on its relocation packages because as a rule they are tiered, more flexible to handle exceptions, and relocation expenses rarely extend beyond one year because there are no extensions. The focus is on getting the transferee settled at the new location as fast as possible in permanent quarters. The main lesson that the Government can learn from benchmarking against private industry is that expediency is important. Currently, the Government permits Federal employees to voucher items from a move up to 4 years after the move (2 years to complete a relocation plus a two year extension). This is a drain on Federal accounting systems as monies must remain allocated to cover transactions.

The Travel Management Policy Division of OGP examined the issues facing agencies and employees in a relocation. Through benchmarking sessions with private industry as well as a RBPC consisting of many agencies' relocation policy experts, the current proposed rules emerged.

B. Proposed Changes

This proposed rule—

- Amends section 300-3.1 to add the terms and definitions for “accompanied baggage” and “unaccompanied air baggage” and change the definitions for “Household Goods (HHG)” and “Non-foreign area”;
- Amends sections 302-2.8, 302-2.9, 302-2.10, 302-2.11, and 302-2.110 to reduce the length of time to complete a relocation from two years to one year;
- Further amends sections 302-2.11 and 302-2.110 to reduce the length of time for relocation extensions from two years to one year;
- Adds two new sections to part 302-2, subpart A, and amends section 302-2.100 to require disclosure statements so that the Government will not pay for relocation expenses that are paid by another Government or private source;
- Adds seven new sections to part 302-2, subpart B, to define relocation programs, relocation payment systems, and relocation management reporting systems;
- Adds two new sections to part 302-3, subpart D, relating to separation travel timing and extensions;
- Revises section 302-4.300 to reduce the mileage rate for relocation to be in